

Ch. Brown

Green Mountain Freeman.

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Autumn Rain.

The Autumn rain, the Autumn rain,
The dripping, drenching Autumn rain;
Dashing against the window-pane,
Spitful in its stormy glee,
Splashing in the mimic sea
That gathers round the door.

The Autumn rain—a cheerless thing—
With thought of joy or hope to bring,
No songs of gladdened fields to sing;
Dull heavy drops come hurrying by
As molten from a leaden sky,
And cooled in coming down.

The Summer rain, the Summer rain,
How hopeful its awakening strains,
How joyous sounds its glad refrain!
Aow soft its pattering footsteps fall
Upon the flowering maples tall,
And groves of whispering pines.

But when the Autumn rain comes down,
Whether in country, whether in town,
Then nature wears her gloomiest power;
Our thoughts' toes, like the fading leaf
Assume the hues of Nature's grief—
Her tears—the Autumn rain.

But though the clouds may sleep and lower,
To tinge with gloom the passing hour,
O! Autumn rain, thou hast no power
To move me by thy tender tears:
For on the Future's golden years
The light of Hope shines clear.

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THE UNKNOWN MOTHER; OR, SHADOWS O'ER LIFE'S PATHWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MORNING DOUBTS."

[CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER IV.

"Thou art like thy mother, child."

Yet it could not be love, for I know not the name:
What passion can dwell in the heart of a child?
ByRON.

She had a dream of the Spirit Land,
One more ere the leaves grew dim,
And her eyelids drooped and she went away
To tinge with the seraphim. J. H. S.

"Lordy sakes, aunt Judy, did you ever see
such a long day as dis ar'?" "pears to me I neber did. Seems as if Massa an' Miss Ellie neber would come," and Milly, old Sol's handsome daughter, now one of the housemaids, paused before aunt Judy, looking as if her patience was nearly exhausted.

"Laws, child, don't you be so onsey, it's a long way to do station, and mebbe do cars ar' delayed, so Miss Ellie haint got dar yet."

"I s'ume somethin' will happen so she won't come."

"Have you prepared her room, every thing just as will suit young Missus?"

"Yes, I've ordained the flowers twenty times to-day, an' Lutie thinks they'll do."

"Ordained, honey, I s'pose you mean arranged—"

"Yes, so I does, but any way I meant to have 'em so de purtiest one will see her fust. Mebbe she'll not car' so much about 'em as she used to, 'fore she went away. Lordy sakes, I wish they'd over come."

"Why, Milly, what an impatient child you be! perhaps they'll not come at all to-night, what'll you do den?"

"I do know, but I guess I ain't de only impatient on dar is, by de way, Massa Rupert keeps walkin' 'round de sittin'-room out on de 'randah an' den back agin. I'm thinkin' he's in some hurry, an' if he wasn't so lazy, he'd ride out an' meet 'em. Den dar's Lutie, I s'pect she'll have a disaffection in her eyes, for lookin' out so much. Lordy sakes, how much she does think of her darlin', as she calls Miss Ellie."

"Well, Milly, it's nat'ral she should think a heap on her, she's allers been jes' like a mother to her. But dar', Mrs. Croyden wants you."

And Milly disappeared just as Rupert again went out to look for the carriage. This time was more successful than he had been before, for a few moments later the old family carriage rolled up the broad avenue and paused at the steps. Mr. Merlyn instantly alighted and assisted the bright, smiling Euloeen to the ground, where she met the warm greeting of Rupert, and scarcely had he released her hand ere Milly sprang down the steps and caught it, covering it with kisses, while she exclaimed:

"Lordy sakes, Miss Ellie, how handsome you've grown!"

"Thank you, Milly, I think you deserve a return of your compliment, for I see you have changed greatly."

And then, as Rupert assisted her up the stone steps, Mrs. Merlyn came forward and greeted her quite affectionately. Mrs. Croyden stood in the door, and behind her was aunt Judy and several other of the blacks, all waiting to get a kind word from "Miss Ellie," and lastly Lutie, her white face flushed with joyful emotion, clasped the hand of her young charge and drew her up stairs to her room, when she

laid aside Euloeen's bonnet and scarf, and then folding her to her heart in a warm caress, she whispered,

"God be praised, that I see you again, my darling, my own Ellie!"

With equal tenderness did Euloeen return Lutie's fond caress, for with the love of a child did she regard Lutie, and often had she sighed to be again with her. There were many questions to ask while Euloeen arranged her dress, and then, after smoothing her soft curls, she espied Milly's bright flowers and selecting one from among them, she placed it in her hair and descended to the drawing-room.

There she found Rupert, her aunt and father. Rupert quickly rose, drew out an easy chair for her, saying:

"You must be much fatigued, Euloeen, take this chair."

And as she, thanking him, complied, he took another near by, and both joined in asking and answering questions, till the tea-bell summoned them to the table.

After tea Rupert called her out upon the verandah to look at the Western sky, where the sun was slowly descending, surrounded by rosy-tinted, golden and crimson clouds.

"Do you have the view of such lovely sunsets at R——?"

"Not many," she replied. "Yet oh! is that not lovely, and it seems even brighter that I can see it from home."

"Have you been anxious to get home again?" he asked.

"Yes; you know it has been a year since I was here. You have been more fortunate, Rupert, and could come when you chose."

"Yes, but it has never seemed so much like home, before, as it does this eve, because you are here, Euloeen."

"Well, I am glad you are here now, everything will be natural, and I expect to be very happy this vacation."

"Are you too much fatigued to take a stroll beneath the shade trees, just as we did so often when I was at home last summer?" asked Rupert.

"Not in the least," she replied, "and together they sought each familiar walk, while each related things which had occurred to them in the past year."

Upon their return to the house, Mr. Merlyn met them at the door, and taking Euloeen's hand affectionately in his, said:

"Mrs. Hamilton informed me that you had made great progress in the study of music, Euloeen, and that you might not lose anything for want of practice during your vacation. I have had the old piano replaced by a new one, which I hope you will accept as a testimonial of your father's love."

And so saying he led the way to the parlor, which she had not before entered, where she found a splendid rosewood piano awaiting her pleasure.

"O! father, dear father," nothing could have pleased me better; how shall I be able to express my gratitude for so beautiful a gift!" and twining her arms around his neck, her eyes already filled with grateful tears.

"By always being just what you are to me," he replied, "the dearest, best of daughters, and the perfect image of your mother."

"O! may I prove myself worthy of such an appellation, and ever resemble my mother, since it is pleasing to you?"

"Only in person would I have you resemble her, my Ellie," he quickly added. "May your fate never be like hers."

"Am I never to know what that was, father? You said perhaps you would tell me sometimes."

"Not now, darling. I did wish to remind you of her, but you look so much as she did when I first knew her that I forgot myself.—Forgive me for being so thoughtless."

"I have nothing to forgive, and you have left me nothing to regret, only that I cannot soothe the sorrow of your heart."

"Hush, dear child, you do soothe it. But dry these tears, and give me some music, then shall we both recover our cheerfulness."

He placed the stool and she sat down, though it was some moments ere she regained her composure, and then when her fingers pressed the snowy keys there came forth a low, soft prelude, sweet as the echo of a spirit-song. But suddenly changing it, as if a new thought occurred, she played one of Beethoven's grand anthems that her father loved, and which she had often heard him sing.

She waited until she heard his voice and then joining her own, the holy song floated through the room, and through the house, till every inmate turned towards the parlor door. When it was finished, she played a lively march, then her father said, "give us a song, Ellie;" and, after pausing a second or two, she sang "Sweet Home," in a voice of the sweetest melody.

Swiftly flew the moments, lights were brought in, and still, at the request of her friends, Euloeen sang and played, till, at last, her father drew her away from the instrument saying:

"That will do, Euloeen, you will be ill to-morrow, if we keep you up any longer."

And soon after, bidding them a kind good night, she sought her room, and there kneeling down, she offered the simple orison of a loving and grateful heart, then sleep, "the sweet restorer," speedily closed her weary eyelids.

Bright and joyous were the days that followed. If it rained, Euloeen played and sang, or her father or Rupert read from some favorite volume, and when the weather was fine, there was a splendid black pony which had taken the place of the bay one she used to ride, at her command, and accompanied by her father and Rupert, but oftener by Rupert only, she visited all her old familiar haunts. Many, O! many were the pleasant hours which fled away in those few weeks, and often she felt that she chased the shadow from her father's brow.

To tell the pleasure which Rupert enjoyed, would be impossible. The best of brothers or the fondest lover could not have been more attentive. And as he saw every day how the sweet child, who had been so fair even in childhood, was expanding into the still more lovely girl, his admiration grew yet deeper, and stronger became the resolution to win her. Yet there are resolutions made sometimes that are never accomplished, and Rupert began to think perhaps his might be one of those, at the close of a conversation they had one day, as the vacation was drawing to an end.

She had been so frank and confiding all along, his hopes had strengthened, not dreaming that this same frankness originated from the sisterly affection she had for him. She had always turned the subject whenever he had hinted, even the most distant, at the probability of their union, but this she had replied:

"Rupert, I wish you would not ever say or think any thing about such a thing again, because I do not think it will ever be."

"Why do you think so, Ellie?" he quickly asked.

"Because I do not think I shall ever love you well enough, I have not a wish or thought that you should ever be anything more to me than the same dear brother you always have been, and I have been thinking if I never should have any other feeling about it, I was doing wrong not to tell you. Forgive me, dear Rupert, if, from thoughtlessness, I have already done wrong, I did not intend to do so."

He did not reply for some moments, and then he looked again on her sweet face, saddened with the thought that she was giving him pain, and said:

"Ellie, why do you think you cannot love me well enough, you are young yet, and may learn to love me, and I will willingly wait."

"No, Rupert, it would not be best, for if I should not, then it would be worse for you."

"Not worse than it is now, and I am willing to run the risk, you will like me better, Ellie, I will make you love me, if you will let me love."

"I fear not, as you would wish me to love you."

"But why not, Ellie? there is some reason that you do not tell, perhaps you have already seen some one you like better at R——, is it so?" he anxiously asked.

"No, Rupert, no, it is not so."

"Then if you love me best of any one, why do you wish me to banish the thought of our union?"

"Because it is only a sister's love I have for you, and surely, Rupert, you ought to be satisfied, and convinced it is better you should hope for nothing more. Say that you will not, but let us be the same dear brother and sister we have been, looking forward to nothing farther."

"No, Ellie," he said angrily. "I must be all or nothing, I will not accept a sister's love from you."

"O! say not so," replied Euloeen, in a distressed tone.

"I will say it," he quickly added, more angrily "because I will not accept it, may nor your friendship either, if you will not love me, I ask nothing."

"O, Rupert, my brother, you—"

"Hush," he interrupted, quickly, "I shall hate you if you call me so, I will not be your brother, remember what I say."

"I shall not remember it, Rupert, because you are angry, and you know not what you say, and you will think differently when you are calm."

"I am calm now, Miss Merlyn, and you will see that I shall remain so. But I do not care to say, or hear more."

And the rest of their ride both remained silent, and when they reached home, he allowed

her father, who came out, to assist her from her horse, and after coldly thanking her for the pleasure of her company, he turned away, and she saw him not again that day. Her father marked the tone of Rupert's words, and saw that she was distressed about something, but forbore to make any inquiries then, so Ellie, too, disappeared.

"Well had it been for Rupert had he heeded the gentle request, 'let us be the same dear brother and sister we have been.' But such was not his disposition, it was as he had said, 'I must be all, or nothing.' In rejecting the lover, she could not retain the friend."

Such, were his feelings the remainder of the day, but at night, when he reflected, he remembered she had said he had not a rival, and after long hours spent in thought, he resolved that he would not give her up, if she did not love another, he might perhaps by acting as her friend, yet win her. Yes, he would seek her in the morning, and tell her he would be her brother, her friend, but he would hope for nothing else, yet inwardly he would hope, and he would win her.

Following this resolution, he sought Euloeen in the morning, and after asking her to forgive his anger the preceding day, which she readily did, he continued:

"I have seen my error. Let us be friends, yes, let me be your brother, as you said, Ellie, and I will hope for no more."

And Euloeen, too artless herself to look for deception in another, joyfully assented. During the remainder of their stay at home, Rupert said not one word that could betray his still cherished plans, and Euloeen believing his words had all been sincere, and seeing that he always appeared as cheerful as before, soon forgot the circumstance, and was as happy as ever.

A few days before they were to return, among the letters brought in one morning, there was one with a foreign post-mark for Mr. Merlyn. Euloeen noticed that so soon as her father glanced at it his countenance changed visibly, but he immediately rose and sought his room. Wondering what it could contain, Euloeen slowly went to her chamber, and commenced a letter to Mrs. Hamilton, but ere she had finished it, Milly appeared at the door and exclaimed:

"Lordy sakes, Miss Ellie, I guess Massa's done got some bad news. I jest went by the lib'ry door, an' he called me in, an' told me to find you, an' tell you he'd like to see you. I never seed him look so white."

Euloeen waited not to hear more, and was beside her father, whom she found considerably agitated, from some cause or other.

"What is it, dear father, what bad news have you heard?" she quickly inquired.

Closing the door, he drew her close to him, imprinted a kiss on her brow, then placing her a chair, he sat down himself, and still retaining her hand, he replied:

"That which in the end may prove good news, I hope, my darling, but lest it should not, my daughter must forgive me for not telling her what it is."

"As you think best, father, but Milly said you wished to see me."

"And so I did, to tell you that, on account of the information I have received, it is necessary that I should start for Europe in the next steamer."

"For Europe, father?" exclaimed Euloeen, in blank astonishment.

"Yes, Ellie, and I regret that I cannot take you with me, but as my stay must be short, I hardly think it best for you to leave school.—Can you be content with such an arrangement?"

"As what, father?" said Euloeen, not half comprehending a word he had said.

"To return to school, and let me go alone.—I shall not stay long."

"O, father! can I have so many miles between us?" and the tears started to her eyes.

"But I must go, Ellie."

"What if you should never return? O! I cannot let you go, father, I cannot," and starting up, she threw her arms around his neck, and sobbed upon his bosom. Her father seemed much distressed, yet soon replied:

"If by going, I could obtain that knowledge which would remove the sorrow of my heart, that I have carried for sixteen years, and then returning, could tell my Ellie that she had a mother whom she could then know, without fear or shame, could you not spare me, darling?"

"A mother?" said Euloeen, raising her head, and looking him in the face wonderingly.

"Are you going to be married, father?"

"Never, Ellie," he replied, emphatically.

"What do you mean, then? My mother is dead."

"What if I should say, Ellie, that though I

have allowed you to receive that impression, yet she was not dead?"

"O! father, it cannot, cannot be she is living; you know not what you say," and a look of intense alarm came over her face for she began to fear he was losing his reason.

"She is living, dear child," he quickly said.

"O! my father, what terrible thing has come over you and turned your brain?" exclaimed Euloeen, in a tone of the deepest sorrow.

"Nay, Ellie, I am perfectly sane. Do not look at me so sorrowfully. I thought it would be a joy to you to know that she lived, and it is certainly so, dearest."

She could not doubt longer, he spoke with such sincerity, and a light, such as he had never seen, spread over her face, as she exclaimed,

"Living, living! O, can it be? and I never yet have seen her. O, father, shall I ever look upon my mother living on the earth?"

"I will tell you, Ellie, darling child," he said, gazing upon her adoringly: "I will tell you all. But,—no," he quickly added, as if a second thought would not allow it. "No; it would be wrong to raise hopes which perhaps I cannot realize. No, Ellie, your mother lives in your resemblance to her; but if I can find that for which I go, then can I tell you of her, so that you can love her, if you are not permitted to know her."

"Are not permitted to know her, father? You talk as if she was living, and then as if she was not. O, tell me, tell me! I do love her now. I will love her always."

"I do not know, Ellie. If you knew all, perhaps you would not say so."

"I should, O, I should! Why should I not? You love her, father, I know you do."

"I do, dear child. I confess with shame, that I still love her."

"Shame, father? Why do you say that?" He hesitated, but finally said,

"I must not tell you now. Perhaps when I return—"

"You always say perhaps," she interrupted sorrowfully.

"But if there is an uncertainty, I had better say it, Ellie, had I not?"

She replied by saying,

"You have certainly admitted that she is living, father—"

"If I have admitted it, Ellie, it must go no farther. You must never let the revelation of the fact pass your lips without my permission, remember, Ellie. Do you promise me this?" he asked.

"O, father! how can I say she is dead, if any one should ask me if she is living?"

"No one will ask you here, and should any one away, could you not say that you had never known a mother's love? I would not have my darling tell a falsehood for worlds."

"I will be silent, then, until it would be a falsehood to remain so any longer. But, O father, if I could know why you have been separated so long; if I could know," she pleaded gently.

"It would only give you sorrow, Ellie."

"I could bear it, father," she quickly replied.

"Disgrace and shame, too, Ellie?"

"Shame, father,—that word again? O! what do you mean?" and she laid her face upon his shoulder, while he felt a shudder run through her frame.

As he made no reply, she presently raised her head, and he was almost frightened at the look of suffering upon her countenance.

"Ellie, Ellie, are you ill?" said he anxiously.

But she gently disengaged herself from his arms, and kneeling down beside him, dropped her head upon the arm of the chair, while she murmured in a voice of touching sorrow,

"O, father, father! this is terrible."

"What is it, Ellie? Tell me," and he endeavored to raise her again to his arms, but she resisted, and said:

"O, why did you not leave me in ignorance forever? Why did you heed my entreaties, since ignorance was bliss to this? O, father, it will kill me."

"Ellie, what terrible thought possesses you? Speak, and tell me quickly."

She raised her head, and tried to speak, but failed at first. Then he faintly distinguished the words,

"Was it so; was it so, father?" from her white lips.

"What was so, my darling child?"

"Was she—was my mother—your wife?"

And she looked into his face as if her life depended upon his answer. Mr. Merlyn started, as if an arrow had struck his heart, and sternly replied,

"Ellie, Ellie, is your father such a villain in your eyes as these thoughts would imply?"